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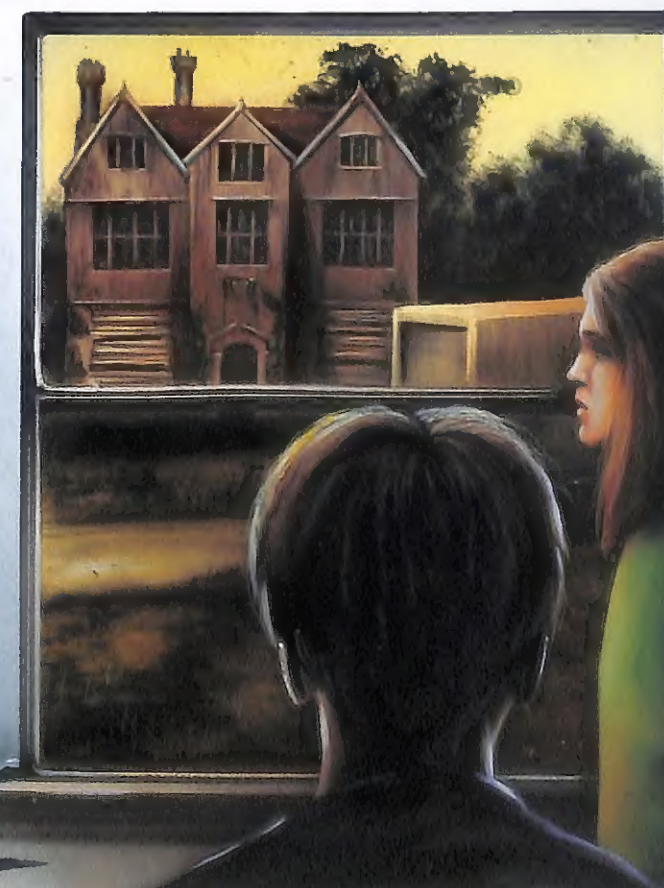


Lisa stood at her bedroom window and watched the
moving van pull away from the old Muller place. The
house stood in the middle of a huge piece of vacant
land on the edge of town, and Lisa's house was on a
street that ran along one side of it. Her bedroom
window stared straight at the huge, decaying mansion. It had
been empty for as long as she could remember. But this evening,
just before sunset, a van had pulled up in front of the house. Two
men had unloaded a couple of large boxes from the back and
driven off.

"Have you seen anybody yet?" asked Chris, her brother, from
behind her.

"No. Just the two removal men. I wonder who would buy such
an ugly old place?"

Chris shrugged. "Ugly old people?" he suggested. Lisa
snickered, and followed him down to the dinner table.



That night, she dreamed that a beautiful princess had moved into the Muller house, and she wanted Lisa to come and stay with her. So Lisa moved into the house, and there she found everything she had ever wanted, all waiting for her.

Lisa woke up in the middle of the night feeling strange. She felt jumpy and cranky, like she was hungry. The dream was still clear in her mind, however, and she slipped out of bed and went to her window.

The windows of the abandoned house were dark. But its ancient walls seemed to shimmer in the moonlight, as if they were magically clean and white again. She stared at it for a while, then shook her head and went back to bed.



The next morning, Chris surprised her by asking if she wanted to check out the new people at the Muller house. Still thinking about her dream, Lisa agreed quickly.

They got dressed, then picked their way across the field. As they got closer to the house, Lisa could see that the broken windows had been boarded up. The remaining ones had heavy blinds drawn.

They came round to the front of the house, and Chris stepped on to the porch.

"Wait, Chris!" Lisa whispered loudly. "What if someone's home?"

"Well why else are we here?" he snapped. "If you're too afraid, go home!"

She thought about it, but then she remembered her dream. There was no way she was going to miss out on this one. "Go ahead and knock," she said.

Chris stepped forwards and rapped on the heavy wooden door. After a moment, the front door creaked open, and a man stood there. He smiled when he saw Lisa and her brother. "Hello. Can I help you?"

"Uh, hi," Chris began. "I'm Chris Cole and this is my sister, Lisa. We live in the house across the field. We saw you move in yesterday and came over to meet you."

The man nodded, still smiling. "My name is Benjamin. My daughter, Brinn, and I've just bought this house."

"So you have a daughter?" Lisa asked abruptly, remembering her dream.

"Yes. But she hasn't arrived yet. Maybe you could come over this evening after dinner? I'm sure she'd like to meet you."

"Sure," Lisa said. "I'd love to."

"OK," agreed Chris. "See you later."

As they walked back home, Chris asked Lisa, "Why were you so rude to him when he said he had a daughter?"

"I - I had a dream about the house."

Chris spun around and stared at her. "What do you mean?"

She stopped, surprised by his reaction. "I dreamed that a princess lived there. And that she was very lonely and wanted me to come and live with her. And she gave me diamonds and jewellery and all sorts of lavish and wonderful things."

Chris stared at her. "Me, too! I mean, I had a dream about the Muller house, too."

Lisa's mouth dropped open. "Yeah? Was there a princess?"

Chris shook his head. "No. I dreamed it was more like a museum, with all sorts of old swords and armour and stuff!"

Lisa didn't know what to think. She and Chris had always been very close, but they had never shared the same dreams. "This is really weird, Chris," she said.

That night, after dinner, they told their mother they were going to visit the new girl, Brinn, at the Muller house. Back across the field they went, this time under the pale glow of dusk.



The door was opened as soon as they stepped on to the porch. A girl stood in the doorway, outlined by the wash of light from inside. She was very pretty, with long black hair and dark eyes. She smiled at them. "Hello. My name is Brinn."

Lisa felt as if she had found an old friend. She shot a glance at her brother. He was staring at Brinn with his mouth slightly open like a dead fish. She poked him with her elbow as she stepped slightly forwards. "I'm Lisa," she announced. "And this is my brother, Chris. We live in the blue house across the field."

Brinn nodded. "Come in."

She stepped back to allow Lisa and her brother inside. The interior was lit by what seemed like hundreds of candles in gleaming brass candelabras. To one side of the living room was a polished wooden staircase rising up to a darkened second floor. "The electricity's not on yet," Brinn explained. "My father's gone into town to see if he can find a supermarket that is still open." Brinn led them to a big, overstuffed sofa and motioned for them to have a seat.

"I'm really glad you two came over," said Brinn as they sat down. "I always like to meet new people. Is this a nice neighbourhood?"

"It's OK," answered Chris. He proceeded to tell Brinn about some of the other kids who lived nearby.

"So," Lisa asked Brinn when he finished, "where do you and your dad come from?"



"We move around a lot." Brinn shrugged and laughed. "I can't even remember where I was born anymore!"

"Have you ever been to another country?" asked Chris.

"Oh, yes. We used to live in Europe."

"Really?" asked Lisa, sitting forwards. "Whereabouts?"

Brinn began telling them of all the different places she could remember visiting while she lived in Europe. Chris and Lisa listened in fascination.

Suddenly, Lisa looked at her watch. They had been sitting here for more than two hours! It was almost nine o'clock. "Come on, Chris," she said, getting to her feet. "We have to get home."

Brinn rose with them. "I'm glad we got to know each other. Thank you for coming over to see me."

Chris nodded. "Do you want to come over to our house tomorrow?"

Brinn shook her head. "I'm sorry but I can't. I was very sick for a while, and my father wants me to stay inside and get as much rest as possible."

"You're OK now, aren't you?" asked Lisa with concern.

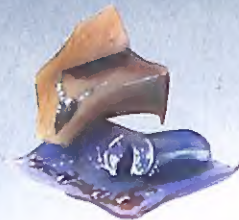
"Oh, yes. Not one hundred percent, but better." She smiled shyly. "It really helps to have someone to talk to."

"We can come back here tomorrow," Chris offered. Lisa nodded in agreement.

"That would be great," Brinn said. "Why not come over tomorrow evening?"

So the next night they returned to Brinn's house. Lisa didn't talk to Chris about it, but she could tell that he liked Brinn as much as she did. The girl was fairly quiet, but she always had some interesting story to tell. Soon, it became a nightly ritual to go over to Brinn's house

and sit in the living room, talking. They rarely saw Brinn's father, but he didn't seem to mind the constant company for his daughter.



One night, after Lisa and Chris had returned home and gone to bed, Lisa had a horrible dream. She dreamed that Brinn was dying, and she was the only person who could help her. But for some reason, she was not able to. She watched helplessly as Brinn sat in the middle of her living room and slowly withered away.



Lisa woke up sweating. Then, on a hunch, she sneaked down the hall to her brother's room and opened the door. "Chris," she whispered. "It's me."

"What?"

"I just had a nightmare about Brinn."

Chris looked at her strangely. "What was it about?" he asked.

"I dreamed that she was dying and I had the power to save her. But I couldn't get to her," Lisa said, hurrying her speech.

Chris was silent for a long moment. Then he said, "I had a dream like that, too. What do you think it means?"

Lisa thought for a moment. "Maybe she's more sick than she told us. And we're both picking that up somehow."

"Let's ask her tomorrow, OK?"

Lisa agreed and went back to her room. The rest of the night she managed to sleep without dreaming.



The next day, as soon as they were up, they got dressed and ran over to Brinn's house. They knocked and rang the bell, but nobody answered. Lisa tried to peer into the windows, but all the curtains were pulled.

Throughout the day, Chris and Lisa both kept a close eye on the house. But they never saw Brinn or her father. That night, after dinner, they tried again.

This time Brinn opened the front door. Lisa jumped slightly. "Brinn! We didn't see you come home!"

Brinn smiled. "I haven't gone anywhere."

"But we came by earlier," said Chris. "And nobody answered."

Brinn shrugged. "I must have been asleep." She opened the door wider. "But come in. I've finally managed to unpack everything, and I'd like to show you something."

Brinn led them through the front room, where her father sat reading. He didn't look up as they walked by him and down a brightly painted hall.

"I think you'll like this room," Brinn said to Chris, opening a door. Chris looked inside and couldn't believe his eyes. The room was filled with swords and weapons of every style. Shields hung on the wall with faded banners. Suits of armour lined the sides of the room like soldiers standing to attention.

"Wow!" he practically yelled as he darted forwards into the room. Lisa pressed forwards to see, but Brinn stepped in front of her.

"What was he so excited about?" she asked, puzzled. All she had seen was some rusty old plumbing sticking out of the wall.

"You know how boys are," Brinn answered, leading Lisa to another room.

Before Lisa could ask her what she meant, Brinn had opened the door to the next room. Now it was Lisa's turn to gasp in wonder. The room was lined with display cases. Each one had piles of jewels and necklaces and rings and everything else Lisa could imagine. It was just like her dream! She stepped forwards, hardly knowing where to start looking.

"I'll be right back," Brinn said. She closed the door behind her, leaving Lisa in the room alone.

Lisa lost herself in examining the wealth around her. She moved slowly from case to case, mesmerised by the treasures displayed.



After a while, she thought of Chris. Then she looked around the room in confusion. She had a strong feeling that something was wrong. "Chris?" she asked in a soft voice. Then she ran for the door. "Chris!"

She flung the door open and froze. The hall was dark and smelled of damp plaster. The shining candelabras were gone, and in their place were single candles set on the floor. The painted walls were actually covered with faded, peeling wallpaper.

Lisa took a deep breath and plunged down the hall to the room where she had left her brother. The door was hanging on one hinge, and when she pushed it open it tore itself out of the frame with a screech and crashed to the floor. Lisa jumped back in fear, too startled to speak. The room was empty. The walls in here had nearly collapsed, and bits of plumbing were revealed like the bones of a corpse. For some reason, there were round pastry tins nailed to the walls, with old pieces of rags hanging next to them.



"Chris!" Lisa yelled. "Chris! Where are you?" Then her mouth snapped shut, as she heard a loud crash upstairs.

"Lisa!" her brother screamed from somewhere above her. "Get out of there!"

Heart pounding, breath coming in short gasps, Lisa ran from the room. She turned down the hall towards the living room. The scenery had changed here as well. The fine, rich furniture was just old boxes of rubbish! She wanted her brother! What was happening to him? "Chris!" she screamed as her eyes darted around the room.

Then she saw it. The true form of the sofa. It was a coffin, set in the middle of the room like a prized possession. Curled up on one end of it was a withered skeleton wearing the clothes that Brinn's father had been wearing. Lisa stared at the clothes, trying to accept what her mind was telling her. To her horror the coffin lid began to rise.

As she edged towards the door, a whiskered snout pushed its way out from under the lid. This was followed by the biggest rat she had ever imagined. It perched on the edge of the coffin and stared at her.

She saw movement out of the corner of her eye and whipped her head around to look at the staircase. Her brother staggered into view. "Chris!" she screamed.

He turned towards her and her heart seemed to stop. The left side of his shirt was covered with blood. It seemed to spray from a wound in his throat. He saw his sister and pointed to the door. "Run!" he said in a hoarse voice.

Then Brinn pounced into view. She was taller and older now, about the age of their mother. Her mouth was smeared with blood, and she advanced on Chris with hunger in her eyes.

Lisa's legs buckled, and her vision swam in and out of focus. Another scream from her brother jerked her head up. Brinn was standing over him, her mouth fastened on his neck.

"No," Lisa whispered. Then, louder, "No!" She scrambled to her feet and bolted for the door. She wrenched it open and practically flew off the porch and into the field. Sobbing and choking, she somehow made it across the field to her house. She fumbled at the doorknob, then thrust herself inside.

She stopped in complete confusion. She was back inside the Muller house! The door creaked shut behind her, and she slowly turned to look.

Brinn stood there, smiling with red teeth. Her fangs gleamed in the light of the candles as she bent over and clutched Lisa.

THE END

OUR HAUNTED WORLD

Get ready to be scared
out of your wits because
we're in spooky France...



DEATH DOWN THE WIRE

In 1984, an electric storm (like the one above) brought death 'down the wire' to two unlucky people in Toulouse. When lightning hit a telephone wire, a fireman – who was on the phone to a colleague about storm damage – literally got it in the ear and died. Another girl who was calling her boyfriend was fatally 'knocked out'. Though it is a rare occurrence, telephone wires can occasionally conduct all the power of an electric storm and deliver a deadly shock to whoever is at the end of the line!

FURRY FRIEND FOREVER

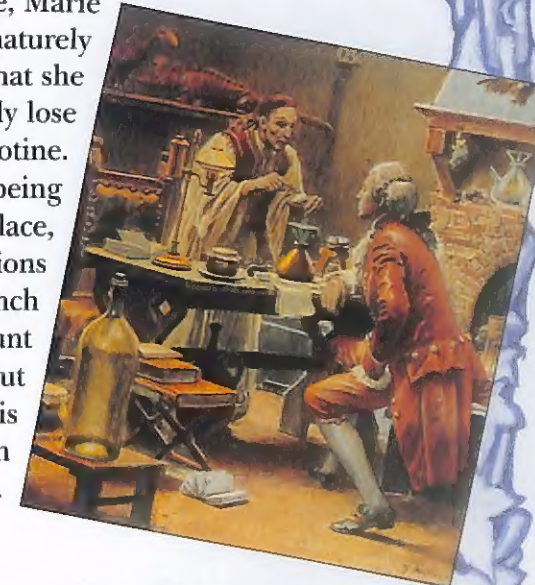
In 1954, seven-year-old René Leret, from Sampier, near Lyon, was given a little white kitten, called Jacques. They became inseparable friends but, tragically, just one month later, the kitten was run over and killed. Afterwards, René behaved very strangely. He said he did not want another pet because Jacques was still sitting by the window. René then started putting out food and opening the door to let the dead kitten in! Even more freaky were the newly developed photos which René's mum brought home. Posing with René was his little white kitten – weeks after it had died! Ghostbusters sensed a strange presence in the house and even found claw marks on the newly painted door. But they could not make head or tail of the case.

THE VISIONARY COUNT

Back in the 18th century, Count Alessandro Cagliostro was fascinated by the bizarre and the strange. He used potions and crystals to help heal the sick and believed that the letters in anyone's name could be used to tell their future.

This method proved frighteningly accurate. He correctly predicted that King Louis XVI would have a violent death at the age of 38; that his wife, Marie Antoinette, would be 'prematurely wrinkled through sorrow', that she would be imprisoned and finally lose her head on the guillotine.

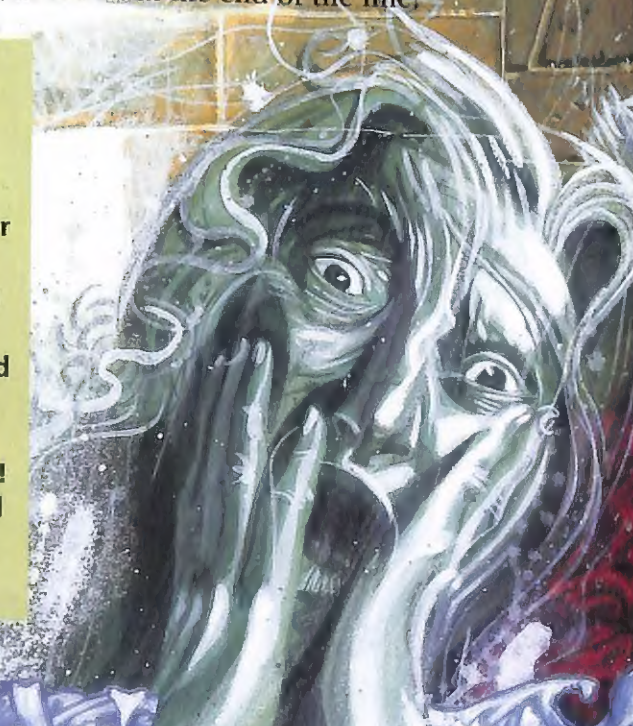
Banished from France after being framed for the theft of a necklace, Cagliostro continued his predictions in Rome, where a worried French diplomat reported him. The count was imprisoned and tortured, but he refused to retract any of his predictions, all of which turned out to be true.



THINGS THAT GO BUMP...

Calvados Castle in Normandy (below) was the scene of such serious poltergeist activity in 1875-6 that its owners were driven from their home! Banging noises at night, the sounds of someone racing up and down stairs, ear-splitting trumpet blasts and a woman apparently screaming for help meant that the residents got no sleep at all. The cries of a woman sobbing and the loud notes of a locked-up organ being played added to the unease of the residents. And, as if all that were not enough, furniture and other items were often thrown about the castle by unseen forces.

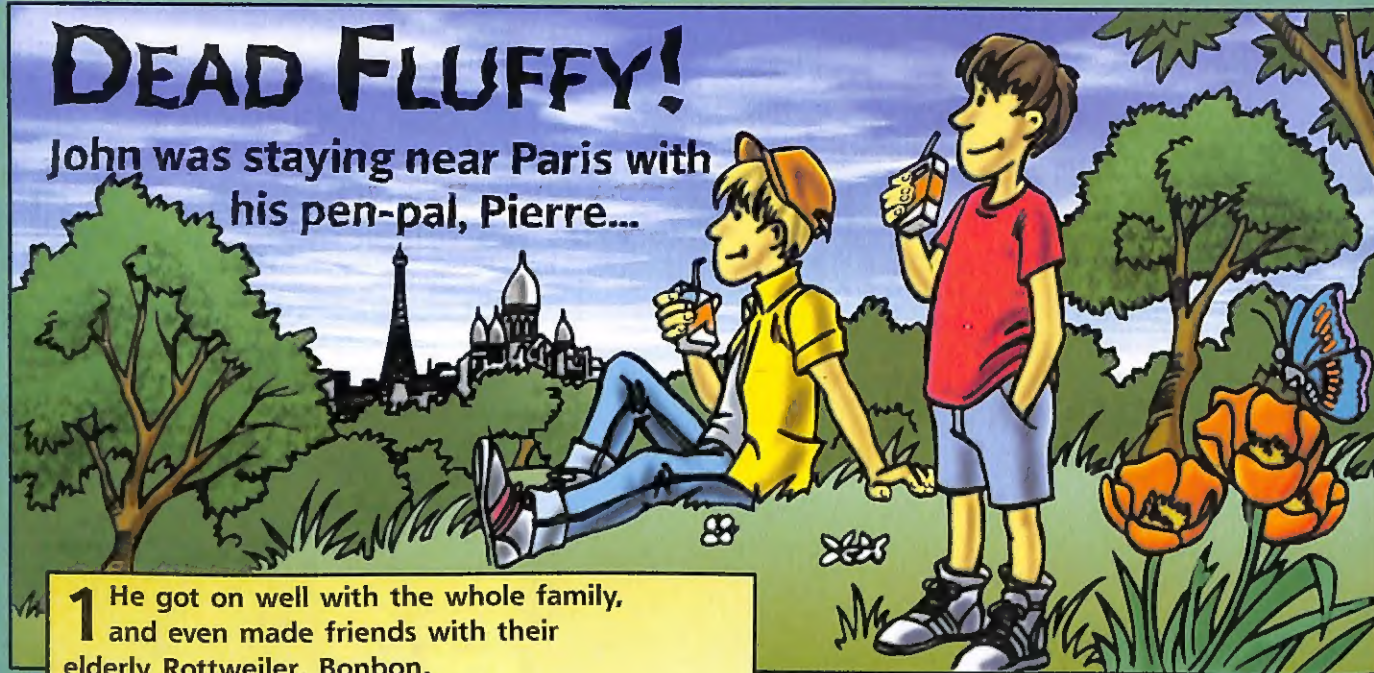
When various ceremonies to exorcise the troublesome poltergeist had no effect, the owners sold the 10th-century castle and moved away. The spirit causing all the bother was believed to be a previous owner, an angry woman who kept coming home to cause havoc. Whoever it was, there's no doubt that any house – even a big castle – which has a poltergeist can seem very crowded!



PJ 98

DEAD FLUFFY!

John was staying near Paris with his pen-pal, Pierre...



1 He got on well with the whole family, and even made friends with their elderly Rottweiler, Bonbon.



2 The next door neighbours didn't like dogs, but were very fond of Frou-frou, their daughter's large white rabbit.



4 The boys got so wrapped up in a new computer game that they didn't see Bonbon go into the garden.



5 He came in half an hour later and dropped a very dead Frou-frou at their feet.



3 One morning, the boys were left alone in the house. Pierre's parents asked them to keep an eye on Bonbon.



6 The horrified boys peeped next door. The rabbit hutch was empty. So was the garage – at least the neighbours were out!



7 They got to work shampooing the rabbit, then blow-drying its long hair. Afterwards, it looked a lot fresher – like a sleeping rabbit, not a dead one!

8 They sneaked into the next door garden and placed Frou-frou in its hutch.



9 Happy with their cover-up job, they waited for Pierre's parents to come home. But they arrived looking very puzzled. The neighbours had just told them that some sick person had dug up their pet rabbit, who'd died and been buried two days before...



10 ...and as if that hadn't been bad enough, the sicko thought it funny to give poor old Frou-frou a wash and brush up!





THE MONEY PIT

Evidence no: 49/1
The Money Pit

Note: 1m
= 3.28ft.



Special Investigation File: 49

Subject: the hunt for buried treasure
in the Money Pit

Place: Oak Island, Nova Scotia

SpineChiller creates a file

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1795, a 16-year-old boy beached his canoe on Oak Island and went exploring. He stumbled across a big round dent in the ground. At the edge of the dent stood an ancient oak tree. One of its scarred branches looked suspiciously like it had been used as a pulley – perhaps to bury treasure! The youngster fetched his friends and they began digging...

Two hundred years later, teams of explorers have still not reached the treasure because the Money Pit, as it has become known, is rigged up to an ingenious booby-trap. Six people have lost their lives and thousands of pounds have been wasted in the pursuit – but still the hunt goes on. Perhaps it is no wonder, because whoever built the Pit left one vital clue: a mysterious stone (below). It was dug up at 90ft. A professor cracked the code.

CAN YOU CRACK THE CODE?



A = .	F = ▽	K = □	P = ⊖	U = +
B = +	G = ▷	L = □	Q = ▲	V = ▼
C = ⊙	H = ◁	M = ⊞	R = ⊗	W = □
D = ▮	I = ∴	N = ×	S = ⊙	X = ⊠
E = ∴	J = ∞	O = ∴	T = △	Y = ✓

Crossed out F = ✕

ANSWER: Forty feet below two million pounds are buried.

Evidence no: 49/2
The mysterious stone inscription

Evidence no: 49/3
Oak Island

February 1980

The treasure has been found. It was dug up 200 years ago, to be precise – by the man who put it there in the first place!

This is what Pit expert Rupert Furneaux believes happened. He's certain that Sir Henry Clinton, who was in charge of the British forces in America around 1780, built the Pit as a hiding place for war funds in his keeping. He recovered the stash before returning to England.

Explorers are outraged. "Captain Kidd built the Pit and the treasure is still there. We will carry on hunting," one said.

According to Furneaux, Kidd's days as a pirate were long gone by 1780. Furneaux claims the Pit designer was too clever to be a pirate and Kidd would never have had the men or the time. He believes that it took 100 men six months to build!

December 1850

Dear Uncle

We have at last discovered the secret of why the Pit floods every time we get near the treasure, at 98ft (30m). It is booby-trapped! Just below the hoard, there is a tunnel that branches off to the beach at Smith's Cove. Rigged up underneath the beach is a clever contraption that feeds sea water inland and down the tunnel. That's why, as quickly as we pump water out of the Pit, it just keeps shooting up again.

The clever-clogs designer, whoever he was, is not going to get the better of us. Our next plan is to plug the tunnel. I promise to keep you informed. Your loving nephew

THE TREASURE HUNTERS

1795 Young Daniel McGinnis and friends dig to 30ft (9m) with spades.

1804 Explorers dig down and discover mysterious stone. Keep digging. Strike solid wooden object, but booby-trap goes off and water shoots up Pit. Forced to give up.

1849 Pit floods again. Hunters forced to stop digging but drill down and hit layers of oak and metal. Conclusion: it's two treasure chests filled with money! Unable to dig them up.

1850 Team returns and tunnels over to retrieve hoard. Booby-trap springs again. Flood tunnel is discovered but treasure seekers can't block it off.

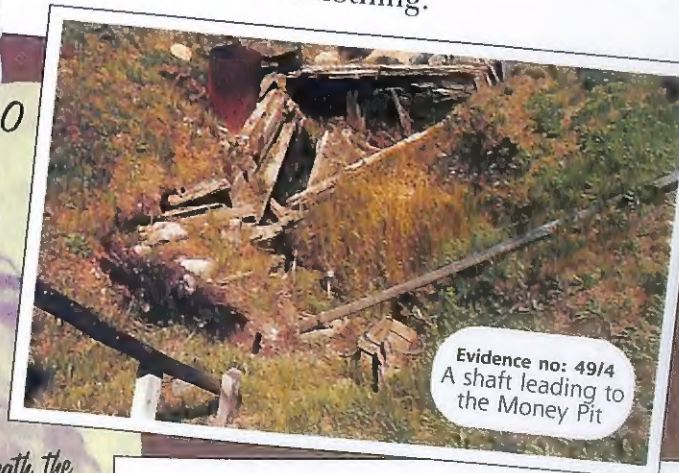
1860s New team digs more shafts to get access to treasure but CRASH! Bottom falls out of the Pit. Suspected hoard drops further down.

1897 Another group rediscovers stash. But DISASTER! A second booby-trap! More water zooms up Pit. Lose hoard but find inscribed stone revealing letters 'v.i.' – very important?

1930s New team finds underground stream. Treasure must be at the bottom – no such luck.

1960s Bulldozers and cranes called in. Fail to dig up the goods. Four men die in pursuit.

1970 Submarine camera shows up what looks like three chests and a severed hand! Divers sent down but return with nothing.



Evidence no: 49/4
A shaft leading to the Money Pit

CONCLUSION

The story of the Money Pit is one of the most frustrating yet fascinating mysteries of all time. Despite enormous efforts from teams of explorers, the treasure remains as elusive as ever. Only one thing is for certain. Whoever built the Money Pit must have had something to hide.

Unexplained

CLASSIC



SERIAL

Chapter 1

A Christmas Carol

Retold from a story by Charles Dickens

It was Christmas Eve when Jacob Marley died. Ebenezer Scrooge was the only mourner at his funeral. But over the next seven years, Scrooge barely gave his dead business partner a thought. He did not even remove his name from the sign over the door of their counting house. He was too tight-fisted to waste paint on it.

Hard and sharp as flint, Scrooge was a grasping, secretive, solitary old miser. His cold heart had made his thin lips blue and his walk stiff, yet real weather did not affect him. No amount of warmth from the sun on a summer's day could cheer him. Nor could any bitter wind chill him further. No one stopped him in the middle of the street to

say, with a smile, "My dear Scrooge, how are you?"

Beggars did not bother him, children ran away from him, even the dogs of blind men led their masters out of his path.

But what did Scrooge care! He had no time for people, only money.

One Christmas Eve, Scrooge was sitting in his counting house, busily arranging money loans and debt repayments. It was cold and bleak outside – and not much better inside. Scrooge kept the smallest of fires in his office and always refused the requests of his poor clerk, Bob Cratchit, for more coal.

"A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice suddenly. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who was entering the office. His eyes twinkled and his cold cheeks were blushed with good cheer.

"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

"Christmas a humbug, my dear Uncle! You cannot mean that," said Scrooge's nephew.

"I most certainly do," replied Scrooge. "What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Then what right have you to be angry? You're wealthy enough!" returned Scrooge's nephew good-naturedly.

"What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools?" snapped Scrooge. "What is

Christmas time but a way of spending money you don't have. I wish every fool who is happy at Christmas could be boiled with his own Christmas pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!"

"Come now, Uncle. Christmas is a time for good. It is a kind and forgiving and charitable time. I say, God bless it!"

Scrooge's poor clerk dared to applaud for a moment.

"One more sound from you, Bob Cratchit," yelled Scrooge, "and you'll start Christmas without a job."

"Calm down, Uncle, and please come to dinner with us tomorrow," said Scrooge's smiling nephew.

"No," replied the miser firmly.

"But we would love you to be there."

"Pah. Love is the only thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. Good afternoon, Sir."

"We have no quarrel, Uncle. Why cannot we be friends?"

"Good afternoon, Sir," said Scrooge again, even more fiercely.

His nephew turned and left, still cheerful despite his uncle's bad temper.

Shortly afterwards, two rich gentlemen walked into the office. They greeted the clerk, then turned to Scrooge.

"At this festive season, Mr Scrooge, we try to help the poor. It is a time when want is most keenly felt. Thousands are in need of the most basic comforts."

"Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge.

"Plenty of prisons, far too many in fact," sighed one of the gentlemen.

"Are the workhouses still in operation?" demanded Scrooge.

"I'm afraid to say they are," responded the other gentleman grimly.

"What a great relief!" cried Scrooge. "For a moment I feared that something had stopped their useful work."

The two wealthy gentlemen glanced at each other and then one spoke.

"So as we were just saying, Mr Scrooge, we are raising a fund in order to buy food and clothing for the poor. What would you like to contribute?"

"I would just like to be left alone," said Scrooge. "I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. That's what workhouses and prisons are for."

"But Sir, many would rather die than endure life in those awful places," protested one of the gentlemen.

"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

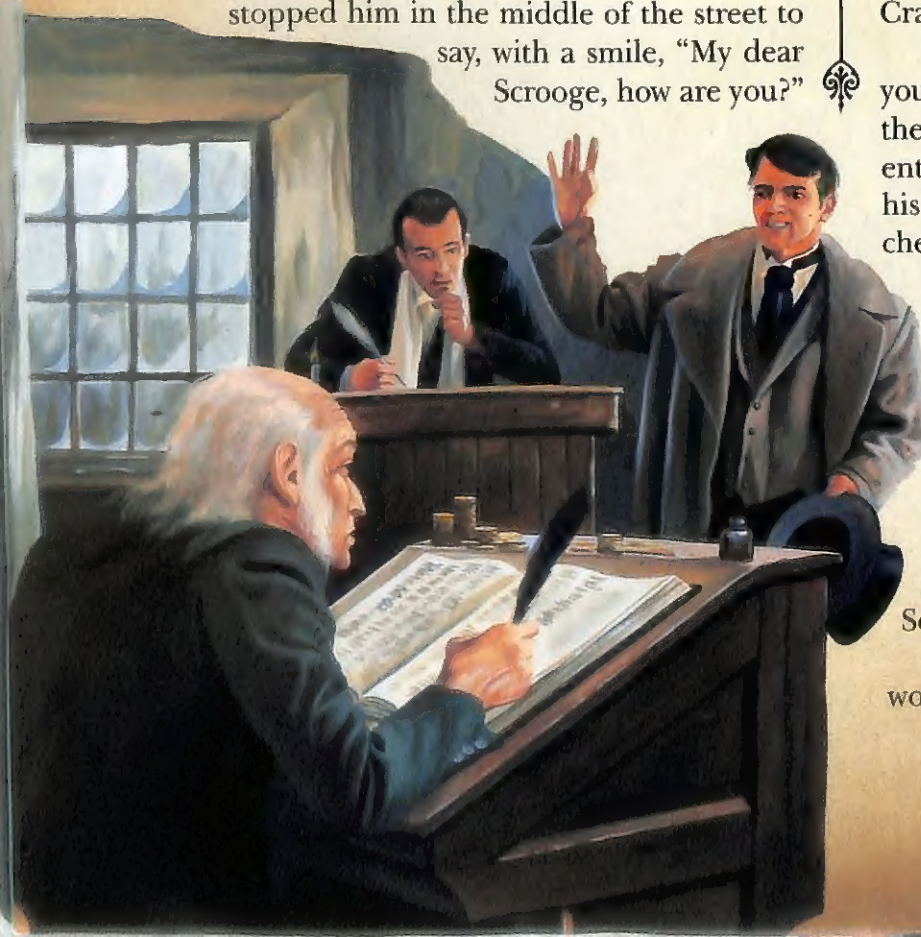
"But Mr Scrooge..."

"It's really not my business," Scrooge interrupted. "It's quite enough for a man to understand his own business. There is no need at all to interfere in other people's. My business occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

Seeing clearly that further argument was useless, the gentlemen withdrew.

Scrooge resumed his labours as the fog and darkness thickened outside. Apart from

Underlined words are explained in WORD POWER.



warning off a group of carol singers, he stayed at his desk until the evening. Then he reluctantly shut the office.

"You'll want ALL day off tomorrow, I suppose?" growled Scrooge to his clerk.

"If that's quite convenient, Sir," replied the poor clerk.

"It's not convenient," said Scrooge, "and it's certainly not fair paying a day's wages for no work."

The clerk observed that this happened only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" said the miserly Scrooge. "I expect you to be back at your desk all the earlier the next morning!"

Scrooge sat all alone over a frugal meal in the same dreary tavern that he always visited. He spent the long evening reading newspapers and checking his bank books before going home to bed. He lived in gloomy chambers that had once belonged to his dead partner, Jacob Marley. They were in a grim building inhabited by no one except Scrooge himself.

As Scrooge reached out to open the front door, he gasped. The knocker, a lump of plain black iron, had changed its shape. Now it looked exactly like the face of Marley. As Scrooge stared in shock, the face disappeared and became the knocker again. Scrooge blinked in disbelief a number of times and shook his head violently.

"Bah! Humbug!" he shouted, entering the building and slamming the door hard. The crash resounded through the house like thunder. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes or fanciful visions. Still, he was a little uneasy as he entered his rooms and locked himself in for the night.

Then he glanced at the old servants' bell that hung in the corner and was astonished to see it begin to swing all by itself.

At first, the bell swung gently. But then the swing became greater so that the bell rang out loudly. The sound was followed by a loud, clanking noise from the cellars. It gradually rose up through the house.

"It's humbug still!" said Scrooge. But as the clanking sound got closer and closer, the colour drained from his thin cheeks.

Suddenly something flew into the room. Scrooge nearly fainted with fright. It was the ghost of his former colleague Jacob Marley.

Scrooge had heard many people say of Marley that he had no heart. Now it seemed to be true. Marley was transparent – Scrooge could see right through him. But the ghost was wrapped in a large, heavy chain. It was made of cash boxes, keys, padlocks, accounts books and heavy purses, all of solid steel.

Scrooge felt the ghost's death-cold eyes staring right at him.

"What do you want with me?" he asked, his voice trembling.

"Much!" replied the ghost.

"You're not even real!" Scrooge said in a voice that sounded more bold than he felt.

At this, the spirit gave a frightful cry and shook its metal chain. This made such an appalling noise that Scrooge fell on his knees and clasped his hands in front of his face as though praying.

"Have mercy!" Scrooge cried. "I believe! I believe in you, oh dreadful apparition."

"Listen, Ebenezer. I made this chain in life, of my own free will," said the ghost. "Perhaps you would care to know about your own chain? It was already the same length

WORD POWER

counting house – an office where people give out loans, collect debt repayments, count money etc

grasping – greedy

humbug – rubbish; nonsense

want – lack of money, possessions etc; poverty

workhouses – grim, prison-like institutions where the poor once lived and worked

reluctantly – unwillingly

frugal – containing little; meagre

fanciful – imaginary; unreal

as mine seven Christmases ago. But I am sorry to say that it has grown a very great deal since then!"

"Tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob," begged Scrooge.

"I have none to give," the ghost replied. "I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. When alive, I never roamed beyond the world of money and our counting house. But now, in death, I must travel forever. I have no rest, no peace, just the constant torture of guilt."

"But you were always a good man of business, Jacob," said Scrooge.

"Of business!" cried the ghost, wringing its hands. "Mankind was my business. The good of all people, rich and poor, that should have been my business, not money-making."

Hearing this sad cry, Scrooge started to shake rapidly.

"Hear me!" cried the ghost. "You will be haunted by three spirits. Expect the first when the bell tolls one o'clock. Without their visits, you cannot hope to escape the same dreadful fate as me."

The ghost flew out of the window. Scrooge looked out after him. The air was filled with phantoms, each wearing a chain like Marley's ghost. Some chains were short, some monstrously long. Scrooge recognised several of the ghosts. All were wailing in misery.

Eventually the creatures faded, leaving only mist. Scrooge tried to say "humbug!", but the word simply would not come out. Overcome by both terror and fatigue, he fell straight into his cold bed.





WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

There's a story about British actor Anthony Hopkins when he was about to start filming 'The Girl from Petrovka', based on the novel by George Feifer. The actor had checked all his local bookshops, but couldn't find a copy of the novel anywhere. Then, one day he spotted a book left on a bench in the London Underground. He picked it up – it was a copy of 'The Girl from Petrovka'! But the story doesn't end there.



CHANCE IN A MILLION

What makes meaningful coincidence different from chance? Chance is what happens if your lottery numbers come up – it may be a billion to one chance, but it is still chance. If, on the other hand, you suddenly change your normal numbers because a series of events has drawn your attention to some different numbers and then they come up, that is a meaningful coincidence.

COSMIC COINCIDENCE

When coincidences cluster together or influence decisions we make, some people believe that they are a part of a 'cosmic' pattern – a force beyond our understanding. The famous psychiatrist Carl Jung called this 'synchronicity' and said that it involved events that inexplicably happened at the same time and therefore seemed to be linked.

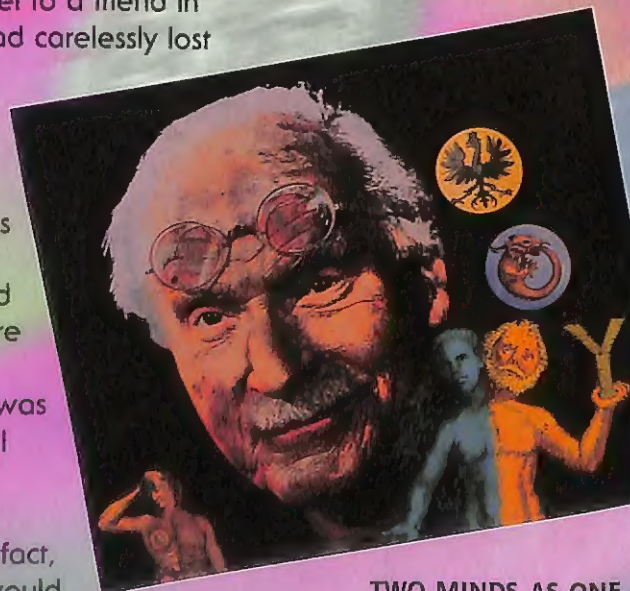


TWO MINDS AS ONE
The psychiatrist Carl Jung (above) and Nobel physicist Wolfgang Pauli (right) wrote about synchronicity together: they believed in it but couldn't explain it.

LOST AND FOUND

On the set of the film, the author, George Feifer, complained to Hopkins that he had lent his own copy of the novel to a friend in London, who had carelessly lost it. His copy had his handwritten notes in the margins. When Anthony Hopkins showed Feifer the copy he had found, they were amazed to discover that it was Feifer's personal copy.

What a coincidence! In fact, some people would say that this was more than just a simple coincidence. They would claim it was a case of 'meaningful coincidence'. Anthony Hopkins needed a copy of the book, the author needed his notes – and the book 'found' its way back.



▲ FANCY MEETING YOU!
Ever been bowled over by the sheer coincidence of it all? Is there a cosmic joker at work?



▲ ALL IN THE STICKS

A handful of I Ching sticks ready to be thrown. How will they land? Will it be chance or meaningful coincidence?

INTO THE FUTURE

There is an ancient Chinese method of fortune telling that is based on a belief in meaningful coincidence.

Masters of I Ching throw sticks or coins, and then 'read' the pattern they make when they fall. As a reference, they look up sayings in the book of I Ching. The sayings answer the questions of the person whose fortune is being told – not directly, but by offering advice that he or she can use to make decisions.

Do the sticks fall by chance? People who believe in I Ching claim that they are 'destined' or influenced to fall in the way they do, and it is this that makes the sayings relevant.

TRIAL BY DIARY

Here is one way to put the power of coincidence to the test. Note down any significant events in a coincidence diary. As time goes by you will be able to see if a pattern of events emerges, or if a series of events will help you make a decision about the future.



Even if this isn't a 'meaningful' coincidence it certainly is a mega one!

◀ LINKED LIVES
Albert Rivers and Betty Cheetham after discovering the string of coincidences that linked their lives.



▲ SMALL WORLD
Albert Cheetham with Betty Rivers: the final coincidence that brought them together was booking the same holiday in Tunisia.

WEIRD WORLDS
PUZZLES

SINISTER SEAWEED

One way through the weed will lead the divers to the submerged city. The other will lead them into the clutches of an 'orrible octopus. Help them pick the right route. Is it A or B?

PICK THE PIECES

Look at all the pieces lying beside this ancient, broken vase. Only four are needed to make it whole again. Which are they?

PHANTOM FACTS

On England's Suffolk coast, the sea has claimed much of the former medieval port of Dunwich. Now gravestones, even churches, lie underwater and legend has it that, from time to time, bells have been heard ringing eerily from beneath the waves.

STONY STORY

Put these six stone tablets in the correct order to find the full story behind these ruins.

FANTASTIC FACTS

Did a land called Lyonesse once exist between Land's End in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly? The story goes that it was lost, with many lives, beneath a sudden surge of the sea, hundreds of years ago.

SECRET SIGNS

The decoration on this ancient piece of jewellery (left) contains hidden letters for you to find. Once you have found them, rearrange them to name a legendary 'lost' place.

FARAWAY FACTS

Death, disease and even torture surrounded early expeditions that set out in vain to find the famed, fabulous gold of El Dorado.

LIFE OR DEATH DECISION

Two explorers have found part of a lost city. But it's full of danger. The first man is safely clear. But his partner has accidentally triggered a death-trap. Where he stands could open up and engulf him, any second, in a jet of steam. Yet the pit is too wide for him to jump. How can he escape?

$$67 - 13 \div 2 - 15 = 12$$

$$3 \times 18 + 12 \div 3 + 1 = ?$$

$$5.25 + 10.75 \times 3 \div 6 + 26 = ?$$

$$81 + 13 \div 4 - 9.5 = ?$$

$$17 \times 9 - 132 + 11 = ?$$

$$7 \times 5 + 6 = ?$$

MYSTERY MAP

Solve the sums carved in the wall behind the female archaeologist. Each answer corresponds with one square on the map. Plot the answers – the first number of your answer reads down, the second across. The first sum has been plotted to help you get started. For each answer you work out, draw a point in the square, then join up the points to the missing treasure. The centre of the x marks the spot!

ANSWERS

SINISTER SEAWEEP: Route B will lead to the submerged city.
PICK THE PIECES: The missing pieces are: II, III, IV, VI (see right)
STONY STORY: The correct order is: d, b, f, a, c, e.
SECRET SIGNS = ATLANTS.
LIFE OR DEATH DECISION: The trapped explorer has only seconds to escape. He quickly uses his rope – ties the end round the tree branch. Then he swings on it, across the pit to safety!
MYSTERY MAP: The answers to the sums are as follows (12), 23, 34 and, 14, 32, 41. The cross meets at 23.

